



# College Readiness Initiatives

Office of the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs  
March 2010

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## LITERACY

Comprehensive Reading Plan: A.S.K. (Assistance, Strategies, Know-How) - WKU developed the Assistance, Strategies, Know-How (A.S.K.) initiative to serve as an umbrella for college reading readiness. A.S.K. establishes a framework for comprehensive, seamless, strategy-based reading comprehension and learning/study skills assistance for all WKU students. ASK respects each learner's unique talents and features multiple paths, differentiated tracks, choices, and outreach to other learning institutions that feed into WKU. Additionally, A.S.K. provides for professional development for public school teachers (P-12) and for WKU faculty to ensure that reading is essential to learning and thinking within content areas and across the curriculum. The A.S.K. initiative is coordinated through the WKU Center for Literacy, Dr. Pamela Petty, director.

CPE Grant: Preparing 4 the Final 4: Getting Your Head in the Game - WKU received a \$30,000 grant to help fund a paired course concept called *Preparing 4 the Final 4: Getting Your Head in the Game*. The purpose of this program was to develop and implement a powerful college readiness initiative that minimized the need for remediation at the postsecondary level. The program also provided a unique opportunity for shared professional development for both WKU faculty and high school teachers. The program served to strengthen both sets of faculty's understanding of the support needed by students who are underprepared to read and comprehend complex text, think critically at the college level, and actively engage in the learning process.

We are responding to teacher requests from those who attended the PD this summer to create innovative and powerful professional development opportunities that allow them to increase students' reading performance quickly and effectively as we demonstrated during this initiative.

WKU Center for Literacy - The WKU Center for Literacy is greatly enhancing WKU's ability to serve students who come to the university underprepared to read and study at the college level through direct services to students and through outreach efforts to school systems within the WKU service area. Further, the Center greatly enhances opportunities for research agendas for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students at WKU as well as boosting the potential for grant and other funding prospects.



## Functions of the WKU Center for Literacy Include:

- Full-time reading specialists
- Literacy Learning Labs available to students, faculty and the community
- Diagnostic & Screening testing in reading and learning
- Full range of school psychological services
- Assistive technologies and Technology-based interventions
- Individual and small group intervention
- Literacy and reading services for adults at the Levels 1 and 2 (pre-GED)
- Professional Development services for P-20 teachers
- Parent training sessions
- Research facility to collect data, measure and report on progress of literacy initiatives and services
- Research opportunities for WKU doctoral and master's thesis students for literacy and school psychology candidates
- Facilitation of the newly developed School Psychology clinic
- Up-to-date, success-oriented motivational techniques
- Resource facility P-12 teachers, MAE candidates, clinicians, practitioners, and school psychologists

**Masters of Arts in Literacy Education** - Beginning summer 2010 the Masters of Arts in Literacy Education will be an on-line graduate program of study. The Literacy Program promotes lifelong learning through reading and writing for pleasure and function for every man, woman, and child. Graduates from this program are prepared to work in a changing, multicultural world in leadership roles in educational programs and institutions, and private and corporate sectors. The Literacy faculty believe learning is an active process in which students construct, test, and act upon their own understandings. The Literacy Program is committed to providing lifelong learning for both faculty and students by promoting courses of study that involve students and faculty in academic peer relationships that stress shared responsibility for learning and for the discovery of new knowledge. The Literacy faculty is committed to research, scholarship, and creative work that results in superior teaching and service to the community and to the professions.

The benefit of putting the MAE-Literacy program on-line is to ensure that school systems in the WKU service region have advanced reading professionals in their classrooms and as literacy leaders in their schools. An on-line MAE-Literacy program removes distance as a barrier for those seeking advanced degrees in literacy. All districts in our service area will have equal access to these educational opportunities. WKU has enhanced technology capabilities to ensure the most advanced delivery systems are in place to serve graduates within this program of study.



## LITERACY - OUTREACH INITIATIVES

**Partnership GRREC region: Gates MacGinitie Adult Literacy Test** – High school freshmen will be tested pre/post to determine grade-level equivalents in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading rate. Teachers within those schools will have the opportunity to participate in a series of professional development sessions using a new synchronous technology application that WKU has recently acquired.

**“Read and ...” professional development series** – Synchronous and asynchronous professional development geared at better preparing P-12 students to be college-ready in literacy (reading and writing) within the WKU service region. A series of five, ten and twenty minute interactive video presentations will be developed as a means of enhancing teachers’ understanding of reading in the disciplines. The live broadcasts will be made available to the WKU service region and a databank will be created to serve as a continuing resource for teachers. The “Read and ...” professional development series will serve to enhance teacher efficacy in using print for learning. A cornerstone of this initiative is the seamless connections between P-12 teachers and college/university faculty.

**College Reading Success – Internal/External Initiative** – Recognizing the need for support for students entering college underprepared for the rigors of college reading, the Literacy faculty at WKU started *College Reading Success* in 2002. The purpose of the College Reading Success program is two-fold: 1) To instruct and provide literacy and study skills support for current community college and WKU students who self-identify as struggling readers/learners and those who may be referred to us by instructors; 2) To prepare graduate students seeking degrees as advanced reading professionals to provide exemplary literacy instruction including appropriate assessments and materials, and to plan for literacy instruction that aids learners in making progress toward their personal and professional literacy goals. The College Reading Success initiative is supported by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation with matching funds from WKU. An extensive website is maintained to support CRS students, graduate students, and faculty: <http://edtech.tph.wku.edu/~ppetty/collegereading.htm>. Data collected indicate the following average of growth among our clients: Vocabulary – 13% growth; Reading Comprehension: 25% growth (treatment time varies by client need).

**Paired Partners: Literacy in the Disciplines** – Service region high schools have identified teachers within certain disciplines (English, History, Biology, Math, and Chemistry) who partner with WKU professors during the academic year. The paired partners collaborate to plan units of study and then coordinate team-teaching experiences that take place both within the high school classrooms and within courses at WKU. The Paired-Partners initiative includes a research agenda geared collecting data on the existing overlaps and gaps in content instruction; types of motivational techniques used and effectiveness of



techniques; materials and multi-media used in instructional settings; and perceptions from both high school teachers and university faculty regarding college readiness.

**“Course Connections” Partnership: WKU Service Region** – Teachers participate in an on-going professional development course on content area reading while serving struggling college students in the Adult Literacy Clinic at WKU. Schools systems partner with WKU to encourage teachers to take advantage of professional development and advanced reading courses. Through WKU’s Office of Distance Education and Learning Outreach (DELO) the cohort program provides reduced tuition for educators who want college graduate credit for either LTCY 524 Content Area Reading or LTCY 523 Diagnostic Reading. Additionally, schools systems demonstrate a commitment to increasing the number of advanced reading professionals in their classrooms by allocating funds that sponsor teachers under the professional development option offered by this initiative.

## **LITERACY – INTERNAL PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES**

**Follow the Reader** – Freshmen select a professor/WKU employee to discuss an “essential read” during one semester. As a means of enhancing students’ skills and strategies in reading comprehension, vocabulary development, critical thinking, and writing, Follow the Reader will pair a freshman who falls within the 18-19 ACT reading range with a person from WKU who will engage the student in lively discussions and “literacy letters” related to a piece of quality literature.

**Literacy Services to the WKU Honors College** – Collaborative efforts between the faculty within the Honors College and the WKU Center have led to the establishment of two initiatives: 1) A special section of College Reading Success is being offered to aid students in sharpening their reading and study skills for optimum academic competitiveness; and 2) Students with the Honors College are self-selecting to receive training in how to aid freshmen who struggle with reading comprehension and study skills. WKU purchased a site-license for Visual Thesaurus and VocabGrabber. Visual Thesaurus is an online dictionary, thesaurus, and web research tool. Each word map display features the word searched in the center of a screen with its meanings branching out from it, with synonyms and related words clustered according to meaning. VocabGrabber allows students and teachers to pick out and analyze key vocabulary words in any text – a newspaper article, book, student-writing sample, etc. – and instantly organize them by significance, frequency and even subject area (Thinkmap, Inc).





## MATHEMATICS - OUTREACH INITIATIVES

**SKyTeach** - The grant for WKU's SKyTeach was one of only 12 awarded in 2007 by the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) to implement programs modeled after UTeach, a highly successful math and science teacher preparation program at the University of Texas at Austin. WKU was the only institution in this region of the United States selected by NMSI for the five-year grant. The SKyTeach mission is to identify the best math and science students and help them become the best teachers by pursuing dual degrees in math/science education within a supportive community for both prospective and experienced teachers and is patterned after the highly successful UTeach program. SKyTeach graduates also receive induction support as they transition to the classrooms.

Interactive, student-centered math and science learning activities are the foundation of the SKyTeach teacher preparation program. SKyTeach is a collaboration of WKU's Ogden College of Science and Engineering and the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences and includes partnerships with 10 of 31 school districts in the Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC).

**Mathematics College Readiness in the WKU Service Region** - WKU is working with the forty-four school districts in the Green River Region Educational Cooperative (GRREC) to improve communication and understanding of the alignment issues on both sides of student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education. Superintendents in WKU's service region have expressed an interest in working with WKU to improve the college readiness in their districts. School districts have data made available by WKU to modify students' senior year curriculum, and to guide professional development experiences with WKU faculty. Each school district is taking unique steps to engage students and their parents in the process of understanding and addressing the problems of college readiness.

**WKU/Bowling Green Technical College Joint Math Placement Exam Project** - WKU and Bowling Green Technical College are piloting a common mathematics assessment exam during academic year 2009-2010. Nineteen high schools in 15 counties in the WKU service region are participating in the project. The project involves 2,458 high school seniors who were administered the jointly developed math placement exam. An item analysis of the test was provided to each student, class, school and district after the pretest, to assist the schools in identifying the concepts most in need of remediation. The posttest window is March 15-26, 2010 with the results scheduled to be returned by mid April 2010. In addition to assisting students, parents, and schools in determining the student's college readiness, data from this pilot will be analyzed to assess the program's effectiveness prior to regional implementation.



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**WKU, Warren County & Bowling Green School Districts Pilot with Pearson Publishing** – During the 2009-10 academic year, WKU, Warren County and Bowling Green Independent School Districts in cooperation with Pearson Publishing piloted a plan for early assessment and intervention in Mathematics. High school students whose ACT mathematics scores range between 17 and 21 were given an early assessment exam during their junior year. The score received on the exam was used in conjunction with the students' ACT Math subject score for placement in an appropriate senior year math track designed to prepare them to be college ready upon entry to a postsecondary institution. Pearson Publishing has agreed to provide necessary software, and WKU faculty will provide training for the high school teachers who will implement the senior year interventions. The high schools decided on the interventions for their students and WKU collected the types of interventions and identified eight major categories for analysis. The posttest window is March 15-26, 2010. In addition to assisting students, parents, and schools in determining each student's college readiness, data from this pilot will be analyzed to assess the program's effectiveness prior to regional implementation.

### **Partial Listing of Active STEM Related Grants and Projects Involving WKU Faculty & Staff (Attached)**

#### **MATHEMATICS – Internal Initiatives**

**Compressed Courses** - Courses designed to allow students to enter WKU and, in one semester, complete both a developmental course and their first college level course. The initial trial courses in English were implemented in Fall 2008. Courses are now available in English, reading and math.

**Summer Early Entry (SEE) Program** - The SEE program provides an opportunity for student requiring developmental courses to take them in the summer to allow students to enter on schedule with their classmates in the fall of their freshmen year. The program offers English, reading and math courses at all levels. The program also guarantees that there will be spaces in the appropriate sequential course for the fall semester. Classes are offered for an 8-week term on WKU's south campus. Coursework is available for students whose needs range from minimally to significantly underprepared.